

**Standard 8-4:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of Reconstruction on the people and government of South Carolina.

**8-4.2** Summarize Reconstruction in South Carolina and its effects on daily life in South Carolina, including the experiences of plantation owners, small farmers, freedmen, women, and northern immigrants. (H, P, E)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students explained how the Civil War affected South Carolina's economy, including the destruction of plantations, towns, factories, and transportation systems (3-4.3). They also summarized the effects of Reconstruction in South Carolina, including the development of public education, racial advancements and tensions, and economic changes (3-4.4).

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students summarized the aims of Reconstruction and explained the effects of Abraham Lincoln's assassination on the course of Reconstruction (5-1.1). They also summarized the provisions of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, including how the amendments protected the rights of African Americans and sought to enhance their political, social, and economic opportunities (5-1.2). They compared the economic and social effects of Reconstruction on different populations (5.14) and explained the purpose and motivations behind the rise of discriminatory laws and groups and their effect on the rights and opportunities of African Americans in different regions of the United States (5-4.5).

In United States History, students will summarize the effects of Reconstruction on the southern states and the roles of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments in that era. (USHC-4.4).

**It is essential for students to know:**

Reconstruction affected the daily lives of everyone who lived in South Carolina after the Civil War.

As a result of the war and the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, plantation owners lost their labor force and a very large part of their wealth. Many were astonished that their former slaves, who they thought were loyal to them, left the plantations. Feeling betrayed and resentful of the former slaves' attitudes, many became more hostile to the freedman. Now they were forced to perform all of the normal household and farm duties themselves or pay their workers, but their investments in Confederate dollars were worthless. All they had was the land. Many entered into sharecropping relationships with freedmen and reestablished their former position as master through a new means. Sharecroppers tilled the land that belonged to their former masters in exchange for a share of the crop. The landowners supplied not only the land but tools and seeds as well. Although the planter elite tried to hold onto slave-like conditions through the Black Codes and control over the government of the state through the constitution of 1865, Congressional Reconstruction brought a temporary end to their political control of South Carolina. However, plantation owners and the middle class engaged in violence and intimidation against African Americans throughout Reconstruction.

**Small farmers** who had not owned slaves were not directly affected financially by their liberation. However, now they had to compete with African American sharecroppers when they marketed their crops. Many who had felt a sense of social superiority to slaves now felt that superiority being threatened. They reacted with anger and resentment and joined the ranks of the vigilante groups that terrorized African Americans. Some small farmers from non-slaveholding districts cooperated with the

Republicans because they would benefit from the educational and economic opportunities they offered. They were called “scalawags” by other South Carolinians.

**Freedmen** were both liberated and displaced in the Reconstruction period. At the end of the war, many freedmen left the plantation looking for relatives sold “down the river” or seeking a taste of freedom. Most soon returned to the area that they knew best, their former plantations. It is a common misconception that former slaves left the South as soon as they had the opportunity to escape the society that had mistreated them. With the assistance of the Freedman’s Bureau and their own determination, they worked to consolidate their families and communities and establish a network of churches and other autonomous institutions. Unable to secure their own land to farm, many African Americans entered into agreements with southern landowners, who were land rich and cash poor. In this arrangement, known as sharecropping, the landowner supplied the seed, tools and land and the sharecropper supplied the labor. Both then shared the crop that was produced. Although the sharecropper was able to move away from the old slave quarters, the sharecropper remained economically dependent on the landowner. In bad years the amount shared might be very little and sharecroppers would take out a loan in the form of lien on the next year’s crop to buy supplies to last until the next harvest. This crop lien system placed the freedmen in a cycle of debt and dependence on the landowners. Although African Americans suffered from white violence and intimidation throughout the Reconstruction period, they continued to claim equal citizenship and carve out as much independence as possible in their lives.

The impact on **women** of the Reconstruction period depended on their social class. Both the wives of elite plantation owners and small farmers shared their husbands’ loss of social status and fear of economic competition from the freedmen. Elite white women had to negotiate household services from former slave women or perform household tasks themselves. In addition, the large number of men killed, and others physically and mentally impaired during the Civil War meant that many elite white women took on non-traditional roles. Former slaves, “carpetbaggers” and “scalawags” also pushed for some women’s rights. As a result of the constitution of 1868, women achieved some rights, including the right to own property in their own name after marriage.

**Northern immigrants**, both men and women, came to South Carolina as teachers, missionaries or entrepreneurs. Some came as Union soldiers and stayed. Reviled as “carpetbaggers”, they were not accepted by most of the white South Carolina society. Some found political opportunity in the Reconstruction governments, others found economic opportunity.

**It is not essential for students to know:**

Students do not need to know the names of any particular Northern immigrant, small farmer or plantation owner. Students do not need to know the total value in slave property that was lost to plantation owners as a result of emancipation. They do not need to know that freedmen celebrated the date that they found out about their freedom. Students do not need to know the names of Northern immigrants who came as teachers and missionaries such as Laura Towne, Ellen Murray, Charlotte Forten and Martha Schofield. They do not need to know the names of Civil War soldiers, such as B. F. Randolph, who stayed in the South.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessment will require students to **summarize** the effects of Reconstruction on plantation owners, small farmers, freedmen, women, and northern immigrants. Students may also be asked to **compare** the effects of Reconstruction on each of these groups. Students should be able to **interpret** maps, graphs and political cartoons and **infer** their relationship to information about the time period.